



SOUTHEAST IDAHO

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA, & POWER COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area's (MSA) seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in May 2001 dropped three-tenths of a percentage point to 3.9 percent from April's revised rate of 4.2 percent. Southeast Idaho Table 1 shows that from April to May, 410 more individuals entered the labor force, 540 more individuals were employed, and 130 fewer individuals were unemployed, leading to the drop in the unemployment rate. The Pocatello MSA has not recorded an unemployment rate this low since the current tracking system began in 1978. The Pocatello MSA's unemployment rate remained below the state's rate of 4.8 percent.

From May 2000 to May 2001, the unemployment rate dropped a full percentage point from 4.9 percent to 3.9 percent. The creation of new jobs in the *Retail Trade* and *Services* industries increased employment opportunities in the MSA.

The number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 110 in May, rising from 33,300 in April 2001 to 33,410 in May 2001. Job increases were split between the *Goods-Producing Industries* (50) and the *Service-Producing Industries* (60). Warm weather allowed construction workers to begin new projects, sports events to occur in the area, and parks and recreation work to get under way which added jobs in *Construction* (70), *Services* (60), and *Government Administration* (50).

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Business Roundtables

The Pocatello Job Service has implemented quarterly Business Roundtables to educate area business professionals on a variety of employment-related topics, and to provide an opportunity for roundtable discussion of employment-related issues between Job Service professionals and area businesses. In May, the topic was "Unemployment Insurance" and discussions covered Unemployment Eligibility, the Unemployment Filing Process, Quit vs. Discharge, Documentation, and Protecting Your Account (lowering or maintaining unemployment insurance rates). Businesses can ensure the lowest possible unemployment insurance tax rate by follow-

Southeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Pocatello City MSA (Bannock County)

	May 2001*	Apr 2001	May 2000	% Change From Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	40,680	40,270	39,010	1.0	4.3
Unemployment	1,570	1,700	1,920	-7.6	-18.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9%	4.2%	4.9%		
Total Employment	39,110	38,570	37,090	1.4	5.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	40,580	40,460	38,910	0.3	4.3
Unemployment	1,510	1,660	1,870	-9.0	-19.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7%	4.1%	4.8%		
Total Employment	39,070	38,800	37,040	0.7	5.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	33,410	33,300	33,150	0.3	0.8
Goods-Producing Industries	4,510	4,460	4,600	1.1	-2.0
Mining & Construction	1,610	1,540	1,720	4.5	-6.4
Manufacturing	2,900	2,920	2,880	-0.7	0.7
Service-Producing Industries	28,900	28,840	28,550	0.2	1.2
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	1,780	1,800	1,870	-1.1	-4.8
Wholesale Trade	1,480	1,480	1,410	0.0	5.0
Retail Trade	7,120	7,130	6,940	-0.1	2.6
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,440	1,430	1,470	0.7	-2.0
Services	8,100	8,040	7,940	0.7	2.0
Government Administration	3,460	3,410	3,520	1.5	-1.7
Government Education	5,520	5,550	5,400	-0.5	2.2

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ing the guidelines listed below to assure only those workers who are truly eligible will receive unemployment insurance benefits.

PERSONAL ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

- Out of work through no fault of your own.
- Physically able to work.
- Fully available to work.
- Actively seeking or returning to full-time work.

FILING PROCESS

- Claimant separation statement filed through Job Service.
- Job Service sends your business the separation statement.
- If layoff is because of lack-of-work, no further action.
- If separation is a quit, discharge, or leave of absence, employer has seven days to respond.

QUIT

- Reason for quit must be work related.
- Reason for quit must be so serious there is no other option but to quit.
- Must show all options available to resolve issue have been pursued prior to quitting.

DISCHARGE

- A willful disregard of the employer's interests.
- A deliberate violation of a reasonable rule.

- A disregard for a standard of behavior, which the employer has a reasonable right to expect.

DOCUMENTATION

- Written warnings.
- Copy of relevant policy.
- Documented verbal warnings.
- Signed acknowledgement of receipt of policy of warning.
- First person witness statements.
- Time cards, attendance records, medical reports, etc.

PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNT

- Issue a handbook or policy to each employee.
- Issue written warnings signed by employee.
- If possible, have witnesses.
- Convey policy changes consistently.
- Deal fairly with all employees.
- Inform Job Service of incident that caused discharge.
- Provide Job Service with a first-hand account of what happened.
- Gather supporting documentation.
- Respond to Job Service requests in a timely manner.

TIPS FOR KEEPING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COSTS DOWN

1. Hire the right person for the job. Do not hire someone who says they will take the job until something else shows up, or will take part time, but wants full time.
2. Recall laid-off workers who are drawing unemployment insurance. You will continue to be charged while they are drawing unemployment insurance. Don't use a layoff as a way of getting rid of someone you should have fired.
3. Give new employees an orientation to the company rules, regulations, etc. Don't hand out a handbook and require a signature before they have read it. Do continuous training and periodic evaluations.
4. Have a short probation period, for example, thirty days. Don't extend the probation period without an understanding of how long, and the conditions to be met.
5. Don't make promises that you really don't mean. For example, "You stay with me and you'll be making \$30,000 a year", or "You will get a raise in 30 days." (Is it contingent upon meeting some standard?)
6. Be fair; treat everyone the same. Don't keep an employee on just to be nice. ("They have a family to feed," etc.)
7. If you terminate an employee for misconduct, the discharge (or suspension pending investigation) should occur immediately. Don't keep an employee on until you can get a replacement because it may show that the violation was not severe enough to warrant misconduct.
8. Document all warnings, and make sure they understand that it is a warning. (Written warnings are preferable.)
9. Fully answer separation statements. Call if you are not sure if something is important.
10. Contact your local Job Service office at any time if you have questions regarding Unemployment Insurance issues.

For more information about this, or future Business Roundtables, contact the Pocatello Job Service office at 235-5420 or e-mail unemploy27@labor.state.id.us.

AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Please note: Information contained in Economic Developments is obtained from area newspapers, local Job Service offices, trade publications, local area Chambers of Commerce publications, and other sources.

- In July, Zion's Bank will open a temporary branch office in Pocatello. The new office, located at 5190 Yellowstone, will replace the office currently located inside the old Smith's Food Center on Yellowstone. The food store closed last year. Zion's will begin construction of a permanent facility at the new location, which should be completed by November 2001.
- Work has begun in Pocatello on the Halliday Street Stormwater Improvement Project. The \$4.46 million project should prevent the east-to-west flooding that occurs during heavy rainfall.
- American MicroSystems, Inc. (AMI) in Pocatello reduced its workforce by approximately 220 workers. A slowdown in the economy, especially the semiconductor business, caused the reduction. Despite the reduction, AMI continues to be Pocatello's largest private employer, employing over 1,000 workers.
- R & L Communications opened an office at 862 Washington in Montpelier. The business sells communication products, DIRECTTV satellite systems, and cellular phones.
- Tony Varilone has been hired as the new Economic Development Specialist in Caribou County. Federal funding for the position was acquired through the Economic Development Administration. The City of Soda Springs is providing office space for this effort.
- Astaris, LLC reduced its workforce in Caribou County by nine workers.
- Nyoplast America, a PVC-fittings manufacturing plant in Preston, has been sold to Freedom Plastics. Nyoplast America, a subsidiary of Nyoplast NV in the Netherlands, was sold to allow the company to focus on the European market. The sale did not affect employment at the facility, but future growth, under the ownership of Freedom Plastics, is expected.
- J.R. Simplot Company has begun a \$15 million upgrade at its Don Plant in Power County. Completion of the upgrade is expected by July 2001.
- Astaris, LLC, reduced its workforce at the Power County facility by 91 workers. The company has reduced production of purified phosphorus from four furnaces to one because of the current power shortage.

Shelley Allen, Labor Market Analyst
430 N. 5th Avenue, Pocatello, ID 83205
(208) 235-5454
E-mail: sallen@labor.state.id.us